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Chief's Statement on May 30th Protests Downtown

by [Chief Carmen Best](#) on May 31, 2020 12:43 am

I want to update you on events of today and tonight.

Currently, we are still addressing a number of groups of offenders who continue to assault officers and loot the downtown core, indiscriminately. The National Guard is assisting in controlling the situation downtown.

At last update we had arrested 27 individuals for a variety of offenses from assault, to arson, to destruction and looting. The priority is protecting life and ending the destruction.

At this moment we know multiple officers and civilians have been injured.

The Seattle Police Department was prepared to facilitate the peaceful exercise of First Amendment rights. In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd we all are rightfully angry, sad, frustrated, and heartbroken.

Due to the actions of some groups who wanted to take advantage of this situation – what started peacefully around Noon, **became violent and destructive** around 2:40pm.

At that time, officers began being assaulted with rocks, bottles, and other projectiles. At 2:38pm the first dispersal order was issued **as the demonstration became unlawful and then a riot.** Offenders were throwing and using incendiary devices including Molotov cocktails. These devices quickly ignited several city and private vehicles.

As the situation continued to intensify, protestors entered the freeway at Spring St and attacked government buildings. As these groups refused to listen to commands or stop their destruction, SPD officers then had to deploy crowd control measures to end the lawlessness as assaults on officers and property continued. At no time have officers discharged their firearms. There were countless uses of non-lethal and crowd control tools.

Protestors then started looting businesses. SPD asked, in addition to the significant number of planned mutual aid resources that had already been planned, for additional mutual aid, including National Guard resources.

At 5pm, the Mayor declared a citywide curfew from 5pm to 5am. This gave officers additional tools to disperse crowds, but the priority remains addressing violent crime and destruction by offenders already disobeying dispersal orders.

We are planning for the rest of the night and tomorrow. We will continue to respond swiftly to all acts of violence and destruction.

I want to commend all of the officers, from Seattle and our mutual aid partners, for their tireless work today to protect this city.

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[<< Previous](#)

[Next >>](#)